REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have received the Office Action dated October 29, 2008, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1-4, 6, 9-13, 15-18, 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Endo (U.S. Pat. No. 7,228,275) in view of Watanabe (U.S. Pat. No. 4,641,342); and 2) rejected claim 5 as obvious over Endo in view of Watanabe and Kemble (U.S. Pat. No. 7,072,837). With this Response, Applicants have amended claim 1.

Applicants amended claim 1 to emphasize a substantial difference relative to the cited art. As amended, claim 1 requires "wherein the first speech recognition engine permits a plurality of ports to be used on behalf of a plurality of users and the system further comprises a port monitor coupled to the first speech recognition engine and to the evaluation logic, wherein the port monitor determines a number of currently available ports and, based on the number of currently available ports exceeding a threshold, causes the first speech recognition engine to be selected and used." The Examiner concluded that Endo does not disclose these limitations and instead turned to Watanabe. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's use of Watanabe in several respects.

The Examiner noted that

> Watanabe et al. teach detector can also be used to selectively switch an active one of a plurality of user channels to one of a smaller number of voice recognizers. A change-over switch 14 connects *m* voice pattern outputs to *n* separate recognition input terminals 121, 122,..., 12j,...12n of a recognition means 15 which recognizes the voices received on its *n* separate recognition input terminals as the outputs from the change-over switch 14. The recognition means 15 can recognize *n* separate voice simultaneously (Abstract, lines 7-10; col. 4, lines 5-12; col. 6, lines 4-6).

Office Action p. 4.

The Examiner's characterization above of Watanabe is inaccurate in at least one respect. The Examiner seems to imply that Watanabe has multiple voice recognizers albeit "a smaller number of voice recognizers" than the number of user channels. In fact, Watanabe only teaches a single voice recognizer (recognizer 15 in Fig. 3). This is a significant point because claim 1 requires the

port monitor to select the first speech recognition engine based on a certain criterion (the determined number of available ports). Watanabe only has one voice recognizer and thus is not selected—it is always active and in operation or at the ready to be used. Watanabe does not teach or even suggest selecting one of two speech recognition engines as required by claim 1.

In addition, claim 1 requires the first speech recognition engine to be selected based on the number of ports that are determined to be available. The Examiner concedes that Endo lacks this limitation. Watanabe also lacks this limitation. While at any point in time, there may be a number of input user channels in Watanabe that are available, Watanabe does not at all teach determining what that the number is, and certainly does not teach using that number as a selection criteria for selecting a voice recognizer. Further, claim 1 requires the port monitor to determine if the number of available ports exceeds a threshold in order to determine whether to select the first speech recognition engine. Applicants do not find any teaching in Watanabe of such a threshold.

For at least these reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are allowable over the cited art. The same or similar reasons apply to the other independent claims and associated dependent claims as well.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are

hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,

/Jonathan M. Harris/

Jonathan M. Harris
PTO Reg. No. 44,144
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
Legal Dept., M/S 35
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400